

WHY CONNECTICUT SHOULD SUPPORT THE CT HUMANITIES

I'm Susan Gilgore, Executive Director of the Lockwood-Mathews Mansion Museum in Norwalk, CT. I would like to thank this Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak in support of the CT Humanities.

The Mansion was built during the Civil War era and is considered one of the most significant Second Empire houses ever built in the United States. To put it in context of other National Historic Landmarks, the Lockwood-Mathews precedes the Newport mansions by a good 20 years.

It was an architectural prototype and a wonder of new technologies. Not even Lincoln's White House was as advanced. Revolutionary, no doubt.

STILL REVOLUTIONARY

These are the branding words chosen by the State of Connecticut to explain what this state represents. The State prides itself in being a major destination and a tourist attraction, and for a very good reason, among its jewels, this state features many important historic sites such as the Lockwood-Mathews Mansion.

The CT Humanities has championed very effectively this concept and supports historic sites all across the State and the State of Connecticut's own branding by funding exhibitions and programs that keep our history alive and help the State of Connecticut:

Create Jobs

Enhance Education

Support our Communities

Some of you may have seen or read about our two most recent exhibits funded by the CT Humanities that I am so proud of: one titled, *What is It? Technologies and Discoveries of the Victorian Era* and still ongoing, *The Stairs Below*, which has drawn many thousands of visitors from all across the region. This exhibition highlights the Mansion's original Servants' Quarters, and explores themes such as immigration, social justice, economics, and the role of women in the 19th century, themes and issues that are still of great interest in today's society.

But sadly, like many historic sites, our museum is no stranger to financial neglect. 50 years ago, our great institution was nearly demolished to make way for a parking lot. We must all remember that the struggle to exist and enhance our communities is not just part of our past, but also must be central to our future!

Scholarship, being able to offer programs that contextualize our current human condition, illuminating what it means to understand our past and envision a better future in this confusing world we live in, to me is hardly quantifiable. But to those of us in the trenches of maintaining and building better communities, it is indeed the CT Humanities that inspires us and gives us the means to continue that fight. I therefore urge you to INCREASE THE CHC BUDGET.